

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS
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AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PEPR, MPOL, GR, TU, CY
SUBJECT: GREEK FOREIGN MINISTER COMMENTS ON ECEVIT'S REMARKS
IN LONDON

REF: (A) LONDON 07678 (B) ANKARA 3737

1. PRIME MINISTER ECEVIT'S MAY 15 PRESS CONFERENCE IN LONDON
RECEIVED CONSIDERABLE PLAY IN GREECE. THE MEDIA HIGHLIGHTED
REPORTS THAT ECEVIT HAD TOLD CORRESPONDENTS THE NATURE OF THE
THREAT FACING TURKEY HAS CHANGED. IN THIS REGARD, ECEVIT ALLEGEDLY
STATED THAT WHILE THERE IS A LESSENING OF TENSION WITH THE SOVIET
UNION, GREECE IS UNDERGOING A MILITARY BUILDUP WHICH "IS DIRECTED
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AGAINST HER ALLY."

2. THE GREEK FOREIGN MINISTER ISSUED A RELEASE MAY 16 REFUTING
THE CHARGE THAT GREECE WAS THREATENING TURKEY. HE STATED:
"THE STATEMENT OF THE TURKISH PRIME MINISTER THAT HIS COUNTRY
IS NO LONGER IN DANGER FROM THE SOVIET UNION BUT FROM
GREECE SURPRISES ME. IF THIS STATEMENT IS GENUINE, ONE

SHOULD CONCLUDE THAT TURKEY IS SEEKING THE LIFTING OF THE
EMBARGO NOT TO DEFEND ITSELF AGAINST THE ENEMIES OF NATO
BUT TO SETTLE ITS DISPUTES WITH GREECE.

"BUT GREECE IS NOT THREATENING TURKEY. THE FACTS PROVE
THAT QUITE THE CONTRARY IS HAPPENING. GREECE HAS PROPOSED
TO TURKEY PEACEFUL PROCEDURES FOR THE SOLUTION OF OUR
DIFFERENCES, WHICH, HOWEVER, HAVE BEEN REJECTED. JUST AS
GREECE'S PROPOSAL FOR THE SIGNING OF A NON-AGGRESSION AGREE-
MENT WAS REJECTED, SO WAS AN AGREEMENT ON THE MUTUAL
CONTROL OF ARMAMENTS. WHICH, THEREFORE IS THE COUNTRY THAT
THREATENS, AND WHICH IS THE COUNTRY THREATENED?"

3. COMMENT: ECEVIT'S SERIES OF PUBLIC STATEMENTS HAS BEEN VEXING
TO THE GOG. ONE JOURNALIST WHO RECENTLY TRAVELLED WITH CARAMANLIS
TO WEST GERMANY WROTE THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HAD SHOWN MILD
IRRITATION AT ECEVIT'S CONTINUED PRONOUNCEMENTS BUT HAD SHRUGGED
IT OFF BY SAYING THAT AFTER ALL ECEVIT HAD ONCE BEEN A JOURNALIST
HIMSELF. IT IS IRONICAL THAT THE GREEKS, WHO HAVE BEEN PUBLICLY
QUESTIONING TURKISH INTENTIONS FOR THE PAST FOUR YEARS, SHOULD
SMART WHEN A SIMILAR CHARGE IS LEVIED AGAINST THEM. NEVERTHELESS,
THE GOG SEEMS PERFECTLY PREPARED TO ENGAGE IN THIS TYPE OF
UNHELPFUL EXCHANGES.

MCCLOSKEY

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